

**Remarks**

**Claim Objections**

Claims 1 and 7 have been amended in order to clarify terminology referring to the native valve components. Support for these amendments is found at page 20, paragraph 00103, second and fourth sentences from the end of the paragraph, i.e., "native sinus region" and "native commissural posts."

**102 Rejection**

All of the claims 1-3 and 5-7 have been rejected based on Gabbay (U.S. Published Patent Application 2003/0040792A1). Claim 1 has been amended in order to distinguish Gabbay. Support for these amendments is found at page 26, paragraph 00103, fourth sentence:

The flared out feature prevents contact between the valve tissue and the anchoring structure if the outflow rim (48) is positioned between the upper edges of the valve leaflets (36) in the open position . . . .

And at paragraph 00103, third and first sentence from the end of the paragraph:

Thus the exemplary embodiment of Figures 11 and 12 comprises three vertical connecting elements (51) . . . . The area between vertical connector elements (51) is thus left free of any structural elements for the accommodation of vessel openings that may be present in the particular valve sinus.

None of the embodiments of Gabbay disclose a flared outlet ring of an anchoring structure below the upper edges of the valve leaflets.

None of the embodiments of Gabbay show such a flaring to prevent contact between the anchoring structure and the valve leaflets. Indeed, at page 4, last line of paragraph 0062, Gabbay teaches suturing the anchoring structure to the valve leaflets shown in Fig. 6B.

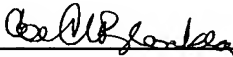
And further, to the extent attachment 1 shows vertical elements, there are far more than three of such elements, such that the structure of Gabbay does not allow for "the accommodation of vessel openings that may be present in the particular valve sinus."

Allowance of claims 1-3 and 5-7, as amended, is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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